

Hampton's Ford Stage Station  
(Bear River Hotel)  
State Route 154 at the Bear River  
Box Elder County  
Utah

HABS No. U-42

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. U-42

HAMPTON'S FORD STAGE STATION  
(BEAR RIVER HOTEL)

Location: State Route 154 at the Bear River. Box Elder  
County, Utah.  
Geographic Location Code: 43-rural-003  
Latitude: 41 47' 11" N Longitude: 112 6' 26" W

Present Owner: L. Odell Bigler, Collinston, Utah

Present Occupant: L. Odell Bigler

Present Use: Residence

Statement of  
Significance: This was an important stop in the old Overland  
Stage Route between Salt Lake City and Montana.  
It is one of the best preserved stations in the  
West.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

1872	April 17, U.S.A. conveyed to Benjamin Hampton W1/2 of NW1/2 Sect. 17.
1875	James Standing
1888	Mary, Leonard and Elizabeth Standing, Hyrum and Agnes Standing (heirs)
1897	Edward Richards
1899	Jacob O. Bigler
1911	Edward Bigler
1917	J. A. Bigler, Edward Bigler
1926	Jacob O. Bigler
1940	Edward Bigler
1943	L. O. Bigler (Description: R 2w, Sect. 17, T 12n, NW)

2. Date of erection: c. 1866.

3. Architect: Unknown.

4. Alterations and additions: Front porch added in 1918. Extensive remodeling of rear section (south), addition of screened porch.

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Building:

This station was an important stop in the old Overland Stage route between Salt Lake City and Montana. Hampton's Station was the next stop after Calls Fort, and is located about two miles west of Collinston on the Bear River. For many years Ben Hampton ran a ferry there and later built the first bridge across the Bear River at this location. From Hampton's Station the road divided, one going north to Montana, the other going west to California and Boise. Stations going north were at Mound Springs, Henderson Creek, Malad, and Slating Creek Station. Stations going west from Point Lookout were at Blue Creek, Dilly's Sink, Pilot Spring, Clear Creek, and Bridge. Hampton's was a "home station" successively for stages of Oliver and Conover, Ben Holladay, and Wells-Fargo. The hotel was previously known as the Bear River Hotel. The site is a 600 acre plot, also on which are original barns used by Overland line animals and equipment. Plans have been announced for the construction of a dam nearby, the waters of which will inundate this property in the future.

Hampton's Ford is also on the Salt Lake Cutoff of the Emigrant Trail to California and Oregon. The trail turned diagonally northwest to the point where the present Collinston-Fielding Road starts down the dugway to Hampton's Bridge at the Bigler Ranch. The old road crossed the present canal location about 100 yards south of the canal bridge. Evidence of the road can be seen in the sagebrush halfway down the dugway just above the present road and a few feet east of the fence which parallels it.

John C. Fremont in 1843 and Captain Stansbury in 1849 are reported to have forded the Bear River here on their way to Fort Hall. Benjamin Hampton and William Godbe operated their toll ferry here in 1853. The tolls were 10 cents for a horse and 25 cents for a wagon. The toll bridge was constructed in 1866 by Ben Hampton, William Godbe, Alvin Nichols, Sr., Mark Bigler and others. The bridge was acquired by Box Elder County in 1883 and has been rebuilt several times, although the original stone abutments remain. By July 1872, Utah Northern Railroad trains were running twice daily, from Brigham City to Hampton's Station nearby.

Stage traffic rapidly declined thereafter, as rail and other transportation facilities increased in the area.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Abstracts of Deeds, Box Elder County, County Courthouse,  
Brigham City, Utah.

Photographs in possession of present owners, Mr. & Mrs.  
L. O. Bigler.

2. Bibliography:

Deseret News, June 8, 1967.

History of Box Elder County, Daughters of Utah Pioneers,  
1937.

Ricks, Joel, The History of a Valley, 1956.

Site Monument, Golden Spike and Box Elder Chapter,  
National Society, Sons of Utah Pioneers, September 14,  
1957.

Standing, A. R., The Salt Lake Cutoff, Utah Historical  
Quarterly, Vol., 33:3, 1965.

D. Supplemental Material:

Inscription on monument at site, placed there by Golden Spike  
Box Elder Chapters, National Society, Sons of Utah Pioneers,  
September 14, 1957:

HAMPTON'S BEAR RIVER CROSSING

Ford was used by Indians, fur trappers, and mountain men. About 1853 Ben Hampton and William Godbe operated a ferry for emigrant traffic. The site became a "home station" successively for stages of Oliver and Conover, Ben Holladay and Wells-Fargo. About 1866 Hampton, Godbe, Alvin Nichols, Sr., Mark Bigler and others erected the toll bridge, stage barns and rock hotel. The bridge was acquired by Box Elder County in 1883. In 1904 the rails reached Malad and traffic through here declined. The station remains one of the best preserved of all stage stops in the old west.

Prepared by John L. Giusti, AIA  
September 5, 1967

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This was an important hostelry of stagecoach days.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent but altered extensively in 1918 -- threatened by flooding from proposed dam.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: A 58' x 46' rectangular, two-story structure with smaller one-story rectangle attached at northwest.
2. Foundations: Limestone - the owner says they extend 5' below grade with footings.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Limestone from a quarry about 1/2 mile to the east, random range ashlar with square beaded mortar joints.
4. Structural system framing: Masonry bearing walls - wood frame floor joists, partitions and rafters.
5. Porches: The present front porch, built in 1918, is the fourth in the history of the building as may be determined from photographs. The screened rear porch occupies an area once walled with stone which served as the hotel kitchen.
6. Chimneys: Stone chimneys at both gable ends are original.
7. Openings: All original openings were spanned with wood lintels. The only original remaining exterior door opens from the second floor to the front porch roof and is a pair of narrow doors each of which has four lights in a vertical row in the upper half. A number of original windows remain, double hung six-over-six.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: The original shape was a saltbox but at the rear the roof was cut out to form a flat

deck which is now covered with a low-sloped hip similar to one which has always covered the one-story west wing. Shingles are green, mineral-surfaced asphalt over earlier wood shingles.

- b. Cornice: No millwork moldings. Simple cornice return at gable ends.
- c. Dormers: A rear dormer dates from 1918. In the days of the hotel two rear bedrooms had no light nor ventilation.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: a stair hall leads from the front entrance to the kitchen which was part of the original dining room. A large washstand was under the stairs when the building was a hotel. A bedroom to the left of the entrance was once a parlor with a fireplace and exterior door in the east wall, behind it a bedroom occupied the present bath and part of the kitchen. To the right of the entrance is still a sitting room. The west wing has its own exterior door so it could be used as a store or saloon. The original kitchen was replaced by a screened porch. The pantry has become a furnace and laundry room.
- b. Second floor: There were once ten bedrooms on the second floor. To reach some it was necessary to pass through others. Pairs of bedrooms on the east and north are now combined to form larger bedrooms.

- 2. Stairways: The stair is in its original central location but is now less steep. The original second story landing fitted in front of the stone wall which divides the rear of the house from the front.
- 3. Flooring: Pine boards.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Wallpapered over plaster.
- 5. Doorways and doors: A number of original four-panel doors on the second floor have plain frames with a slightly sloped pediment over the head.

6. Lighting, type of fixture: Modern electric.
7. Heating: Fireplaces and stoves have been replaced by a central heating system.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. Orientation: The house faces the road on the north. To the east, the ground rises sharply but the area to the west is the flood plain of the Bear River.
2. Outbuildings: The barn across the road to the north is as old as the Stage Station. The machine shed west of the house contains parts of an old blacksmith shop. There are remains of an icehouse and root cellar in the bank east of the house as well as a plastered and wallpapered privy intended for women guests and employees of the hotel.
3. Landscaping and walks, enclosures: The yard is fenced with white pickets and large, old trees surround the house.

Prepared by Paul Goeldner, AIA  
Supervisory Architect  
Utah Project, 1967  
August 14, 1967

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This record is part of a Utah Survey conducted in the summers of 1967 and 1968 under joint sponsorship of the Historic American Buildings Survey of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation of the National Park Service and the Utah Heritage Foundation.

Field work, historic research and record drawings were done under the direction of Project Supervisor Paul Goeldner, AIA (Texas Tech University) assisted by Project Historian John L. Giusti, AIA (University of Utah). Photographs were made by P. Kent Fairbanks of Salt Lake City.

Student Assistant Architects on the 1967 team were Robert M. Swanson and Charles W. Barrow, (University of Texas) and Kenneth L. Lambert and Keith Sorenson, (University of Utah). 1968 Student Assistant Architects were Keith Sorenson, Charles D. Harker and Robert Schriever, (University of Utah), and Donald G. Prycer (Texas A & M. University).